

Minutes

McClellanville Town Council and Planning Commission

Public Hearing on Zoning and Ordinance Updates

August 25, 2025 – 6:00 PM

The McClellanville Town Council and Planning Commission convened as scheduled, with public notice provided in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Commissioner Dan Fifis chaired the meeting. Present from the Planning Commission were Scott Youngblood, Adam Freeze, and Oliver Thames; Commissioner Ginny Prevost was absent. Council members in attendance included Bob Gannon, Jim Scott, Chris Bates, Aaron Baldwin, and Mayor Rutledge Leland. The Zoning Review Committee was represented by Malcolm Baldwin and Elizabeth Campsen. Town staff present included Kathryn Basha and Michelle McClellan. Members of the public participating in the meeting included Erin Browne, Daniel Bates, Ross Thames, Cheves Leland, Richard Campsen, William Lesesne, Barbara Lesesne, Macy Frampton, Ashleigh McClellan, Huger McClellan, Trip Bull, Ruthie Lacey, Cameron White, Pia Griffin, and other community residents.

Commissioner Fifis opened the meeting. Kathryn Basha summarized the summary of proposed changes to Articles 3–14, including regulations on bed & breakfasts, short-term rentals, ADUs, zoning, buffers, parking, subdivision review, appeals, notifications, and definitions.

Commissioner Fifis opened the public hearing for public comments.

Barbara Lesene expressed concern regarding the removal of 800-square-foot accessory dwelling units (ADUs) from the 3,500-square-foot conditioned space limitation.

Erin Browne supported a cap and owner occupancy for short-term rentals, referencing Mount Pleasant's enforcement problems, absentee owners, noise, trash, and uncollected fines.

Daniel Bates expressed his opposition to owner occupancy, noting that guests tend to prefer renting entire homes. Mr. Bates also stated that requiring septic documentation for short-term rentals (STRs) was unfair and stated that census-based data for housing counts is unreliable. Additionally, he opposed the critical buffer ordinance, referencing town aesthetics and concerns about changing the long-standing tradition of waterfront views for homeowners.

Ross Thames opposed the critical buffer, noting his 760 ft of critical line would make guidelines unworkable for his property. He added that the proposed buffer exceeds the state's 40' mandate.

Trip Bull noted positive STR host experience in Mount Pleasant and wants flexibility to rent without living onsite if he chooses.

Cheves Leland supported the critical line buffer for its water quality, erosion mitigation, hurricane protection and wildlife benefits, especially given our proximity to Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge.

Elizabeth Campsen supported owner occupancy of STRs, citing limited police presence in McClellanville.

Malcolm Baldwin stated that STRs may reduce available housing stock and expressed support for owner-occupancy, describing it as protective. He indicated that he has received several complaints from residents about issues related to existing STRs. Mr. Baldwin also addressed the critical line topic and did not support implementing a buffer, noting that most current residents do not have one and therefore he does not support requiring it for new developments.

Daniel Bates inquired further about the proposed changes to the 50' ROW for local roads and their potential impact on village commercial properties that currently have no setback requirements. Ms. Basha clarified that the modifications apply exclusively to new roads and are intended to ensure appropriate widths for drainage capabilities.

Jim Scott expressed strong opposition to further STR expansion referring to them as dangerous for the community.

Cheves Leland requested clarity on 50ft maximum for right-of-way for drainage to be put in writing. Cheves also spoke against the parking ordinance update for shared parking citing shortages. She used Charleston as cautionary example. Ms. Basha explained how shared parking calculations work.

Mayor Leland questioned why the Committee/Commission had not include STRs in the Marine Commercial district like the Village Commercial and Highway Commercial districts.

Commissioner Fifis called for a motion to close the public hearing portion of the meeting. Commissioner Youngblood moved to close the public hearing. The motion received a second from Commissioner Thames and was approved by all Commissioners present. Commissioner Fifis then called for a vote for each section of the proposed Zoning and Land Development Ordinance revisions.

Article 3 General Provisions and Interpretations - Commissioner Youngblood made a motion to approve the proposed amendments and forward them to Council for consideration. Commissioner Thames seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Article 5 District Regulations - Commissioner Thames made a motion to approve the proposed amendments and forward them to Council for consideration. Commissioner Freeze seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Article 7 Screening and Buffering – Commissioner Thames made a motion to revisit by planning commission. Commissioner Freeze seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Article 8 Off Street Parking - Commissioner Youngblood made a motion to approve the proposed amendments and forward them to Council for consideration. Commissioner Freeze seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Article 10 Land Development Approvals - Commissioner Freeze made a motion to approve the proposed amendments and forward them to Council for consideration. Commissioner Thames seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Article 11 Land Development Design and Improvement Standards - Commissioner Youngblood made a motion to approve the proposed amendments and forward them to Council for consideration. Commissioner Freeze seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Article 12 Administration and Enforcement - Commissioner Youngblood made a motion to approve the proposed amendments and forward them to Council for consideration. Commissioner Thames seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Article 14 Definitions and Interpretations - Commissioner Thames made a motion to approve the proposed amendments and forward them to Council for consideration. Commissioner youngblood seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Next, Mayor Rutledge Leland presided over the Town Council portion of the meeting.

Mayor Leland opened the public hearing for an Ordinance to Amend the Town's Business License Ordinance to Adopt the Latest Standardized Business License Class Schedule as Required by the Standardization Act. There were no public comments.

Mayor Rutledge opened the public hearing for an Ordinance Regulating the Use of Fireworks Within the Corporate Limits of the Town.

Daniel Bates voiced concerns regarding the proposed ordinance's setback requirements, questioning why a 500-foot buffer was required for churches while only a 200-foot buffer applied to gas stations. Councilman Scott referenced dangerous past events which caused additional concern for the town. Councilman Gannon expressed concern about fire risk in dry conditions.

Ms. McClellan confirmed this was a public hearing and first reading was held at August Council meeting. Final reading to be held at September Council meeting.

Councilman Scott made a motion to enter into Executive Session. The motion was seconded by councilman Gannon which was approved unanimously.

Next meeting will be held September 2nd at 7PM.

Council returned from executive session, no votes were taken. Councilman Gannon made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Councilman Scott.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle A. McClellan
Clerk of Council